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RECENT LITERATURE IN PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS.

FROM all corners of the philosophical and theological horizon come evidences of the progress of that tendency of thought to which it is becoming customary to apply Professor James's somewhat ill-chosen name of "pragmatism." However the tendency be labeled, it certainly constitutes the most significant and most typical philosophical movement of our time; and it is the more interesting because it is still pretty vague, multiform, and inchoate. The common essential in all its forms, however, is the conviction that all our beliefs about reality—including the presuppositions of natural science—must ultimately depend upon judgments of worth, upon affirmations dictated by the needs of our practical nature, upon our total "will-to-live" and our will to believe that life is livable, rather than upon any strict intellectual necessity. This involves a negative or skeptical attitude toward "intellectualism," a lack of confidence in the ability of the pure theoretical reason to reach the logically certain, absolute, and demonstrative knowledge that it desiderates. For religion, "pragmatism" implies that, on the one hand, the essential religious and moral truths do not force themselves by any sheer logical constraint upon man's acceptance, but await the voluntary response of his whole active and emotional nature; and, on the other hand, that, in the absence of such constraint, a voluntary religious faith—*i. e.*, a faith in the reality of that which is demanded by the ultimate and irreducible needs of man's spiritual nature—is justifiable and reasonable. Professor James has been a notable and path-breaking representative of this tendency in epistemology; very recently two groups of academic philosophers, the one in Oxford, the other in Chicago, have put forward elaborate technical expositions of it; Mr. Charles Ferguson has popularized it in some rather dithyrambic prose essays; and now, interestingly enough, the same opinion manifests itself in French Roman Catholic theology, and comes to us with the *imprimatur* of the Superior General of the Oratory. Father Laberthonnière, an Oratorian, in his *Essais de philosophie religieuse*¹ expounds and defends, with dialectical subtlety as well as with eloquence, a doctrine which he calls *le dogmatisme moral*; this doctrine declares that our judgments—in so far as they concern real existences and not merely the formal relations between ideas—are essentially free acts of the personality, determined solely by the need for action and for self-development.

¹ *Essais de philosophie religieuse*. Par le P. LABERTHONNIÈRE. Paris: Lethiel-leux, 1903. xxxi+330 pages. Fr. 3.50.

Truth, although it comes to us, does not impose itself upon us; it does not enchain nor constrain us. It invites us, it presses upon us, . . . but it does not take us by violence; rather it suffers violence. . . . We can attain to the truth only by the action of our whole being, by *un mouvement de vie*. . . . People often express a desire to be led deductively, by a "chain of reasoning," to the full and complete affirmation of the truth, *i. e.*, to the affirmation of a conception of oneself, the world, and God. If this desire could be realized, the truth would impose itself upon us. Someone may say that this is just what we need, in order to have certitude and to be assured that we are in possession of the truth. But if the truth forced itself upon us, we should not possess it, it would merely possess us; we should be subject to it, and it would control us in our own despite. We should no longer be autonomous, should no longer be truly persons.

This non-compulsive character of truth is as apparent in our scientific as in our religious judgments, except that the practical needs which there lead to affirmation are of a different sort. Scientific truth is relative to man's

needs for those things which he must have in order to attain the ends that he pursues in his ordinary living. But here too the activity of the subject has a part to play. . . . Although scientific truth cannot be said to be moral in its nature, as little can it really be said to impose itself objectively, and of its own force, upon the mind. And if we are to call affirmation in metaphysics *moral dogmatism*, we ought to call affirmation in science *utilitarian dogmatism* (p. 122).

With these "pragmatist" contentions Father Laberthonnière joins a theological doctrine that represents Catholic mysticism in its best and most attractive form. To the non-Catholic reader the author's efforts to reconcile these views (which make knowledge of the truth and religious illumination essentially an inward possession of the individual) with the church's demand for submission to an external authority, will seem a fruitless misapplication of ingenuity.

Similar "pragmatist" conclusions are reached—albeit through different and often rather unintelligible arguments—by the Connecticut clergyman who has written a small brochure on *The Place of Values*.² Mr. Montgomery's pragmatism is, indeed, sometimes so exaggerated—or rather his terminology is so confused—that the volume has the aspect of an unintentional caricature of the doctrine. It is, to say the least, a rather crude way of putting it to say that "religious positions are not held because of their truth—for geometry is true, yet not a

² *The Place of Values*. By GEORGE R. MONTGOMERY. Bridgeport, Conn.: Published by the author, 1903. 62 pages. \$0.25.

religion—but they are held because of their value;” or that, “be the proof never so clear, reasoning has never yet been able to overthrow a single religious tenet—the only way to remove a religious position is to show its lack of value;” or, again, that “whatever has a value is proportionately real and therefore is true.” This is not the place in which to attempt an estimate of pragmatism; but it ought to be said that, as the doctrine becomes popular, and thereby distorted, there is great danger that it will be taken by many as providing a plenary absolution from intellectual responsibility, and a free license to believe anything that one pleases to regard as having “value.” In order to guard against this danger, the limits and the practical application of the pragmatic principle ought to be very carefully defined.

Neither the general doubts of Kant and of the pragmatists about the possibility of theoretically demonstrative proofs in theology, nor Kant’s special objections to the teleological proof, suffice to discourage theologians from reviving that argument; and, in truth, it will, as Kant recognized, always abide in some form as a natural ground of theistic belief. But the Scotch writer who has presented certain phases of the argument in his *The Creation of Matter*³ would have done well to learn from Kant that the teleological proof can never amount to a demonstration, and that the expression of it “should be toned down to the moderate and modest statement of a belief that satisfies the mind without being strictly compulsive.” The present book, which essays to show, after Tait and Stewart, that atoms, ether, protoplasm, etc., “bear the stamp of the manufactured article,” has too much of what Kant called the “dogmatische Sprache eines hohnsprechenden Vernünftlers;” it overstates the argument with much tasteless and truculent rhetoric. It expresses, however, a modern and modified form of the teleological proof, which is partly due to Kant’s objections and to the reasoning of the *Kritik of Judgment*. For it finds the evidence of design, not in the ultimate products or processes of nature, but in the (supposed) original structure and distribution of the elements of things—from which it does not, apparently, deny that all subsequent developments have come by a strictly necessary and mechanical causation.

Three recent books in ethics tend to corroborate the declaration of one of them (that of Professor Palmer) that “today there appears a strange unanimity as regards the ultimate formula of ethics,” namely,

³*The Creation of Matter*. By W. PROFEIT. Edinburgh: Clark; New York: Imported by Scribner, 1903. vii + 176 pages. \$1.

the principle of self-realization, by which "morality has ceased to be primarily repressive and is now regarded as the amplest exhibit of human nature, free from every external precept." The books in question differ very materially as to method to be followed in ethical inquiry, and especially as to the manner of reconciling the principle of self-realization with the claims of objective social duties; but when the question is raised concerning the specific *quale* of the good, these three very dissimilar treatises substantially agree in defining it in terms of human self-development, and in rejecting alike hedonism, ethical rigorism, and perceptional intuitionism.

What distinguishes Dr. Warner Fite's *Introductory Study of Ethics*,⁴ and what will make it widely interesting to the general reader, is the exceptional degree in which it brings systematic ethical inquiry into relation with the practical problems that confront the modern man under existing social conditions. Dr. Fite rejects the too sanguine view that "we know well enough what is right, and that the province of ethics is merely to tell us *why* it is right;" he shows forcibly how full modern life is of apparent conflicts of duties and how often the code of established common-sense is dumb, while the rational will cries out for guidance by some clear and verifiable principle. The outcome of the argument, however, seems at first sight little better than a mocking echo to this cry; for Dr. Fite concludes by pointing out only "the permanently problematical character of human life" and the lasting necessity for a compromise "between our ideals and our conditions"—with no higher principle to indicate the proportions to be observed in the mixture. Moreover, the author's conception of the nature of the two elements in the compromise seems to be equivocal and shifting. He conceives the whole ethical problem as that of achieving an adjustment between two antithetical, though not strictly contradictory, tendencies in human life; but when the attempt is made to define this antithesis with precision, it proves to be a rather Protean thing. At first the contrast is between two radically opposed moral aims, hedonism and idealism—the former being defined as the attitude which "represents the claims of material needs and self-interest," the latter as "representing the claims of idealistic and disinterested aims" (p. 31). These are the two combatants that oppose one another through two-thirds of the book; but presently the reader finds himself facing an essentially different, and much milder antithesis: that, namely, between

⁴ *An Introductory Study of Ethics*. By WARNER FITE. New York and London: Longmans, 1903. xi + 383 pages. \$1.60.

the ideally desirable and the practically possible. The author, having got his contrast into this form, shows sensibly enough that many things which in themselves would be good ought not to be aimed at because, in the complexity of present conditions, the realization of them would incidentally entail disproportionate evils. In the concluding chapter this lesson of going slow in reforms, and of taking constant account of conditions as well as of ultimate ideals, is wisely and effectively enforced. But even here Dr. Fite finds his middle course between the two extremes only by tacitly appealing throughout to a third and paramount criterion—that of general social well-being. In the expository part of the book the treatment of hedonism, if intended as an account of present tendencies, is decidedly misleading. There are no contemporary, hardly any modern, moralists of importance, of whom the various things that Dr. Fite says of the hedonist are true. It is not a fact that hedonism is necessarily, or (now) even usually, connected with the psychological theory that only one's own pleasure can be desired, or with an empiricist epistemology, or with a mechanistic cosmology; and it is either ambiguous or absurd to say that "by pleasure the hedonist means the pleasures of sense." By pleasure the contemporary hedonist means "whatever state of feeling is, when possessed, welcome to the possessor." Of such modern and refined forms of utilitarianism as those of Mr. Sidgwick and Mr. Alfred Hodder the book gives no account and no criticism. Apart from these points, Dr. Fite's study has, in its bearing upon practical issues, so many fruitful suggestions and so much admirable good sense that it is likely to do good service in promoting a more enlightened and more honest attitude toward the problems of duty that arise out of the new exigencies of our period of social, industrial and religious transition.

One hesitates to determine either the meaning or the merits of M. Duprat's study of the "psycho-sociological bases of ethics" from the English version alone.⁵ For it is evident that the translation is hopelessly bad—apparently the work of one impartially unskilled in both tongues, and not unduly solicitous about his author's meaning. Especially fruitful of unintelligibility is the translator's habit—when his original employs several nouns with a single postpositive adjective—of rendering the adjective only with the last noun. Thus M. Duprat is made responsible for the fantastic proposition that for "conduct to

⁵*Morals: A Treatise on the Psycho-Sociological Bases of Ethics.* By G. L. DUPRAT. Translated by W. J. GREENSTREET. New York: Imported by Scribner, 1903. \$1.50.

be rational, it must not be inspired by ideas, tendencies, or contradictory motives." What he said was manifestly: "If conduct is to be rational, it must not be inspired by contradictory ideas, desires, or motives." The translator constantly uses the English word "tendency" where the author apparently means "desire" or "propension." Often the reader can penetrate to the sense of the original only by a hypothetical reconstruction of the French. Still, M. Duprat's main drift becomes tolerably clear. Impressed by the seriousness of the present moral crisis, he desires to re-establish morals upon a new and solidly "scientific" basis, that shall be dependent upon neither theology nor metaphysics. This basis, however, is not to be found in utilitarianism, either egoistic or universalistic. Man is much more than a pleasure-seeking animal; his nature includes notably the consciousness of an obligation to act rationally, and a capacity to be moved by this idea of reasonable action. This rationality requires, first of all, as Kant declared, that the maxims controlling conduct shall "have the form of universal legislation;" it further requires that the whole action of the individual shall be made organic and coherent by its reference to a single and stable system of ends; and that this system shall be as wide and comprehensive as possible. Rational, then, is "the line of conduct consistent in itself and in harmony with a wider system tending to realize the highest conceivable degree of human activity," in the agent himself and in the whole community. M. Duprat then analyzes the conditions necessary for such full and normal human activity, first in the individual, and then in the organization of the social relations of individuals. In the latter connection he discusses such practical matters as the rights of property, the functions of the state (and specifically state monopoly in education), marriage and divorce, etc. The writer declares that "it is the duty of society to work without relaxation for the just redivision of material property," and holds that this must chiefly be accomplished by a larger measure of state intervention in economic matters; but he finds thoroughgoing socialism unfavorable to the realization of the maximum powers of the individual. The book ends still more practically with a consideration of the agencies to be employed in "the struggle against immorality."

One turns with some refreshment from M. Duprat's diffuse discussion, overloaded with digressive citations and criticisms of other writers, and from the obscurities and infelicities of his translator, to Professor Palmer's limpid and exquisite English and his admirably direct, simple,

and sequential exposition. *The Nature of Goodness*⁶ is a book in which ethical science employs the language of common speech — a book with never a footnote, rarely the mention of the name of any of the historic moralists, and almost no technical jargon; yet it exhibits perhaps a more closely wrought logic and a more fully and constantly self-conscious method than either of the books already mentioned. The method followed at the outset of the argument is not, indeed, altogether convincing. Mr. Palmer proposes to discover the moral criterion by an analysis of the common or essential elements implied in the diverse usage of the word "good." But even if usage pointed far more clearly than it does to some single and instructive meaning for the term, this linguistic fact would not suffice, without further and much more elaborate argument, to define either the grounds or the content of moral obligation. And, in truth, good is merely the most general term for the approved or the admired; and men approve or admire things for a great variety of reasons besides those mentioned in this book. In particular, the average man calls other men "good," not necessarily because he sees in their conduct an "organic inter-adjustment of functions," but because he finds that conduct conforming to a type that he has (usually by imitation) learned to think approvable. Just this common, essentially ethical, and plainly ateleological use of the term "good" Mr. Palmer, somewhat surprisingly, leaves out of his account; a full consideration of it would bring into view some fundamentally important aspects of the moral consciousness not touched upon in his book. The chapters on "Self-Direction," "Self-Development," and "Self-Sacrifice," while always philosophic in temper and never didactic, are as profitable for the "moral ideas" as for the "ideas about morality" which they contain; they are full of a shrewd perception of the complexities of human nature combined with a rare fineness of ethical taste. The student of ethics and the teacher of morals alike will find them fruitful of suggestion. The present book deals only with the general and more inward traits of moral character, and will hardly give much direct guidance in those objective casuistical problems of social duty to which Dr. Fite and M. Duprat especially address themselves. But it is to be hoped that Professor Palmer's sequence of ethical studies, of which this volume is the second, may at least develop into a trilogy.

Dr. Bolliger, professor in the University of Basel, proposes "a new

⁶ *The Nature of Goodness*. By GEORGE HERBERT PALMER. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1903. vii + 248 pages. \$1.10.

answer to an old question" in his monograph, *Die Willensfreiheit*.⁷ He attempts to refute psychological determinism empirically by a re-examination of the process of volition; the whole argument depends for its validity upon the correctness of his psychology of the will. He assumes at the outset, without much argument, the truth of psychological hedonism; all choice is made *sub specie boni*; it aims always at an end, and that end is the attainment of pleasure or avoidance of pain. The motive to action is always the present representation of one's own future pleasure. It is certainly curious, at this late day, to find this venerable and all too simple theory of the will, now generally abandoned even by hedonistic moralists, put forward as an accepted and self-evident truth of psychology. Dr. Bolliger wholly ignores the elaborate criticisms on this theory which, among others, James and Sidgwick have made; his book could hardly have been written if he had taken more account of the literature of ethical discussion in English. The principle of psychological hedonism, however, is set up only as a foil to the argument for indeterminism. We choose always some pleasure; but introspection and experience show, Dr. Bolliger declares, that we do not always choose the nearest pleasure, or that of which the present representation is most pleasurable. This is evidence that our will has a certain *zeitüberspannende Potenz*, a power to subordinate the immediately alluring end to the remoter and larger one. If, however, our will were, as the determinist maintains, necessitated to follow always the stronger motive, it could not thus resist the allurements of immediate pleasure; for "the strongest motive would be to realize the greatest pleasure attainable at this present moment." Hence, the author concludes, volition is not completely nor invariably determined by the strongest motive; and the will is free with a strictly indeterminate, though not an unlimited, freedom. However excellent the conclusion, the logical weakness of the argument is obvious. It attempts to prove freedom from the psychological fact that man is capable of prudential self-control. But the determinist will at once answer that precisely what requires to be proved is that the prudent man, at the moment when he prefers the remoter to the nearer good, is not more interested in, more strongly attracted by, that good; that the idea of it has not greater power to fix attention and thus arouse desire. Dr. Bolliger's surprisingly crude and superficial psychology of the will certainly does not succeed in meeting the psychological deter-

⁷ *Die Willensfreiheit: eine neue Antwort auf eine alte Frage.* Von ADOLF BOLLIGER. Berlin: Reimer, 1903. vi+125 pages. M. 2.40.

minist's argument that, in such a case, the prudent man's choice is determined by what is, for him, the "strongest motive" of the moment. The book ends with a sketch of a rather vaguely utilitarian ethical theory, and with some thoughtful considerations on the religious significance of the doctrine of human freedom, especially in its relation to the problem of evil.

A number of special studies in the history of philosophy must be dealt with very briefly, since the only alternative is to deal at length with points of detail. The series called "The World's Epoch-Makers" appears to be devoted chiefly to philosophers and religious leaders—in other words, to the initiators of the more momentous revolutions in the realm of ideas. In such a series it is a little surprising to find Hume rather than Locke chosen as the representative of the British empiricist philosophy of the eighteenth century. There is a fairly clear distinction between those who originate new tendencies and those who carry a prevailing tendency through to such completion that a further movement of thought becomes necessary; and in this case Locke as surely belongs to the former class as does Hume to the latter. Nor has Professor Orr's scholarly and interesting volume on Hume⁸ just the scope that one might expect in view of its title. The biography, though well done, is rather fuller than it need have been, after the work of Burton, Huxley, and Knight; while the analysis of Hume's influence upon his contemporaries and successors is all too summary and inadequate. There is, for example, no indication of Hume's important influence upon Helvétius. The book is chiefly a brief exposition of Hume's ideas, accompanied by less brief criticisms of them from the standpoint of the orthodox Scotch realistic school; it will most interest those who wish a clear and forcible setting-forth of the arguments of that school against Hume's positions, and in proof of the reality of a substantive and rational self, the objectivity of the external world, the illegitimacy of the argument against miracles, and the insufficiency of a utilitarian ethics.

In the same series⁹ Professor W. H. Hudson deals with one of Hume's contemporaries whose place as an "epoch-maker" none could dispute. The picture of Rousseau's amazing personality and career could hardly be more vividly and justly drawn in equal space—for

⁸ *David Hume and His Influence on Philosophy and Theology.* By JAMES ORR. New York: Imported by Scribner, 1903. viii + 246 pages. \$1.25.

⁹ *Rousseau and Naturalism in Thought and Life.* By W. H. HUDSON. New York: Imported by Scribner, 1903. x + 260 pages. \$1.25.

Mr. Morley's splendid handling of the subject takes a far larger canvas. Mr. Hudson's biography is conspicuously free from the sentimentality which characterized the subject of it; the truth is told about Rousseau's character with great plainness of speech, yet in entire good taste. Perhaps, however, the note of grave pity should be more often combined with well-justified sarcasm, before the spectacle of the inconsistencies of a nature so strangely mixed of the vile and the generous, and so unhappily starved in physical heredity and early training. The analysis and discussion of Rousseau's writings are excellent. Here again one could wish for a relatively fuller treatment of both the antecedents and the influence of Rousseau's ideas; and what there is of this sort is so competently done that one especially desiderates more from the same hand. The significance of Rousseau's religious influence is well brought out.

A book¹⁰ which, like Professor Orr's volume, attests the continued philosophical productiveness of Glasgow, deals in a more technical manner with the influence of an earlier and eminently epoch-making philosopher. Mr. Norman Smith's *Studies in the Cartesian Philosophy* gives a fresh and penetrating analysis of the determining assumptions of the Cartesian metaphysics and epistemology, and then traces the logical working out, the vicissitudes, and the gradual weakening of these assumptions in each successive school until, in the system of Kant, they all but "vanish into the imperceptible," and are replaced by a radically new set of presuppositions. The assumptions in question are those involved in Descartes's theory of representative perception; his conceptual rationalism; and his view of causation and of the causal agency of mind. Within the limits of these problems, the book constitutes an analytical history of modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant.

Descartes's influence upon Spinoza is rather minimized by M. Paul-Louis Couchoud, in his study of the Jewish philosopher in the "Collection des grands philosophes;"¹¹ and, undeniably, the customary fashion of classifying Spinoza as a Cartesian is misleading. His most distinctive affinities are with certain of the later schoolmen, with the mediæval Jewish Platonists and Aristotelians, with Bruno, and, for his ethics, with the Stoics; Cartesianism was distinctly a minor factor in his original

¹⁰ *Studies in the Cartesian Philosophy*. By NORMAN SMITH. London and New York: Macmillan, 1902. viii + 276 pages. \$1.60.

¹¹ *Benoît de Spinoza*. Par PAUL-LOUIS COUCHOUD. Paris: Alcan, 1902. xii + 305 pages. Fr. 5.

synthesis of old ideas. Numerous as are the books on Spinoza, M. Couchoud's volume will undoubtedly take a distinctive and important place among them. It especially attempts to present Spinoza, less as a thinker *in vacuo*—having his being, as it were, only *sub specie aeterni*—and more as a product of his time; to this end the author endeavors to reconstruct the many-sided historic *milieu* to which Spinoza's ideas belong—the philosophic fashions of the enlightened, the controversies of the Protestant theologians, the tendencies of the rabbinic schools, the taste for Stoic moralizing, the aristocratic republicanism of the wealthy burghesses, etc. The volume includes an extended analysis of both the major and minor writings of Spinoza.

A serviceable text-book in the general history of modern philosophy has been prepared by Mr. A. S. Dewing.¹² No attempt is made at originality of exegesis, nor at any new correlation of the historic doctrines, and the work will have no interest for the specialist; but as a book for the beginner in philosophy it has some merits. The great outlines of modern thought are made to stand out with unusual clearness, and the treatment of the several systems is, for the most part, well-balanced and readable. The section on Kant, the longest in the book, is also the worst. "The interpretation of truth in terms of what ought to be" is, for example, not a very fortunate definition of what Kant meant by "dogmatism;" and throughout the chapter the pith of Kant's arguments is pretty consistently left out of the author's exposition of them.

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RECENT LITERATURE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

MODERN scholarship in the New Testament field is altruistic. Though unable to give final conclusions, unanimously agreed to, it nevertheless is seeking to popularize its methods; and to those who are willing to receive anything short of flat assertion and positive dogma it offers now an abundance of light. The group of recent books on the reviewer's desk are chiefly of the popular, though no less scholarly, class.

The six lectures, delivered in 1902 in Saint Margaret's church, under the eaves of Westminster Abbey, edited and now published by

¹² *An Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy.* By ARTHUR STONE DEWING. Philadelphia and London: Lippincott, 1903. 346 pages. \$2.